

Message Text

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ACTION IO-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 NEA-06 ISO-00 ACDA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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R 301452Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1043

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

USINT ALGIERS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

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GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

LONDON FOR LAMBRAKIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINS PLO UNGA XF

SUBJ: THE PLO AFTER RABAT--WHAT NEXT?

SUMMARY: LOCAL OPINION TENDS TO VIEW RABAT SUMMIT AS SIGNI-
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CANT "VICTORY" FOR PLO "MODERATES", AND THERE IS CONSIDERABLE

OPTIMISM THAT "SETTLEMENT" OF PLO-JORDANIAN DISPUTE WILL NOW ALLOW ME PEACE EFFORT TO GO FORWARD. ALTHOUGH 'ARAFAT AND CO. WILL NOW BE POINTING TOWARD UNGA DEBATE ON "PALESTINE" QUESTION, THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THEY MIGHT ANNOUNCE FORMATION OF PALESTINIAN GOVT-IN-EXILE PRIOR TO OR COINCIDENT TO DEBATE. AT SAME TIME, PLO "MODERATES" ARE FACING CONTINUED SNIPING AND OPPOSITION FROM FEDAYEEN "REJECTIONIST" ELEMENTS, AND POSSIBILITY THAT LATTER MAY PROVOKE INTER-FEDAYEEN SHOWDOWN SEEMS TO BE GROWING. END SUMMARY.

1. REACTION OF FEDAYEEN AND THEIR LOCAL SYMPATHIZERS TO NEWS OF LAST-MINUTE PLO-JORDANIAN "COMPROMISE" AT RABAT SUMMIT IS SO FAR HIGHLY ENTHUSIASTIC, WITH FIVE-POINT SUMMIT RESOLUTION BEING PAINTED AS ANOTHER PLO "VICTORY". EVEN INDEPENDENT BEIRUT PRESS AND MORE RESERVED CIRCLES OF LEBANESE PUBLIC OPINION, ALONG WITH RADIOS DAMASCUS AND CAIRO, ARE HEAVING SIGHS OF RELIEF THAT PALESTINIAN-JORDANIAN CONFLICT HAS FINALLY BEEN "SETTLED". (ONLY DISSENT EMANATES FROM FEDAYEEN "REJECTIONIST" GROUPS AND FROM IRAQI-CONTROLLED DAILY, BEIRUT, WHICH DISMISSES WHOLE MATTER AS "PLAY ACTING" AGREED UPON IN ADVANCE BETWEEN SO-CALLED PLO "MODERATES", "MONSTER" KING HUSSEIN AND SETTELMENT-BOUND ARAB STATES, NOTABLY EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA AND SYRIA.

2. VIRTUALLY ALL OBSERVERS TEND TO ASSUME THAT RABAT SUMMIT RESOLUTION WAS PRODUCT OF SOME INEXPLICABLE CHANGE-OF-HEART ON PART OF KING HUSSEIN IN FAVOR OF PALESTINIAN "RIGHTS" AS ADVANCED BY 'ARAFAT AND CO. SO FAR THERE HAVE BEEN FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT QUID PRO QUO, IF ANY, GOJ MAY HAVE EXACTED IN RETURN FOR ITS ACQUIESCENCE IN MEETING PLO DEMANDS APPROVED (ON PAPER, AT LEAST) AT RABAT. (COMMENT: WE FIND IT HARD TO BELIEVE THERE WAS NO SUCH QUID PRO QUO, POSSIBLY IN FORM OF SECRET AGREEMENT THAT WOULD PRESERVE JORDAN'S ROLE AS VALID NEGOTIATOR IN FUTURE DISENGAGEMENT TALKS WITH ISRAEL AND PROVIDE FOR SOME INTERIM, POST-DISENGAGEMENT "NEUTRAL" AUTHORITY IN OCCUPIED WEST BANK AND GAZA FOLLOWING ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL.)

3. QUESTION FOR PLO "MODERATES" NOW BECOMES: "WHAT NEXT?" ANOTHER "VICTORY", THIS TIME AT UPCOMING PALESTINE DEBATE AT UNGA, SEEMS TAKEN FOR GRANTED IN PRO-FEDAYEEN CIRCLES HERE. HOWEVER, IN OUR VIEW ANOTHER DEVELOPMENT IS MORE LIKELY TO CONFIDENTIAL

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INTERVENE. THERE HAVE BEEN INCREASING INDICATIONS OF LATE THAT PROCLAMATION OF PALESTINIAN GOVT-IN-EXILE WILL BE NEXT STEP IN 'ARAFAT'S "STRATEGY" TO IMPOSE PALESTINIAN "PERSONALITY" ON WORLD CONSCIOUSNESS--E.G., REPORTS THAT PLO EX COMM HAS EARLY AS FIRST WEEK IN OCTOBER HAD DECIDED IN PRINCIPLE TO FORM SUCH A GOVT. (USING PLO EX COMM MEMBER ABD AL MUHSEN ABU MAYZAR AND HIS PALESTINE NATIONAL FRONT AS VEHICLE); FAROUQ QADDUMI'S STATEMENT TO NEWSMEN IN RABAT THAT SUCH GOVT WOULD BE FORMED " IN NEXT

FEW DAYS" AND THAT PALESTINE NATIONAL COUNCIL WOULD BE CONVENED TO APPROVE IT; AND SADAT'S REVEALING COMMENT (FBIS BE282105) TO EFFECT THAT FORMATION OF PALESTINIAN PROVISIONAL GOVT., LONG A FAVORITE EGYPTIAN GOLA, IS NOW MORE URGENT THAN EVER. IN THIS CONNECTIO, WE INTERPRET THIRD POINT OF RABAT SUMMIT RESOLUTION (RABAT 5253) AS HERALDING ANNOUNCEMENT RE FORMATION OF GOVT-IN-EXILE, PROBABLY BEFORE--OR AT LEAST TO CONCIDE WITH--OPENING OF UNGA DEBATE IN EARLY NOVEMBER.

4. WE UNDERSTAND THAT 'ARAFAT HAD WON PLO EX COMM'S AUTHORIZATION TO RAISE QUESTION OF GOVT-IN-EXILE AT RABAT SUMMIT IN EXPECTATION THAT IT WOULD RECEIVE NEAR-UNANIMOUS ARAB ENDORSEMENT, BUT WE CANNOT AS YET BE SURE THAT HE DID SO (WE NOTE SAID KAMAL'S OCT 27 REMARK TO NEWSMEN--FBIS L281139--THAT ANY DECISION EMERGING FROM SUMMIT ON THIS SUBJECT WOULD BE "SECRET".) SEEMS CLEAR THAT BY ANNOUNCING FORMATION OF PROVISIONAL GOVT. PRIOR TO OR AT START OF UPCOMING UNGA DEBATE, 'ARAFAT AND CO. WOULD HOPE NOT ONLY TO SOLIDIFY ARAB AND THIRD-WORLD SUPPORT FOR PLO INITIATIVE IN NEW YORK, BUT ALSO ENERGIZE FRENCH GOVT--ALREADY ON RECORD, IN PLO VIEW (THANKS TO 'ARAFAT'S RECENT MEETING WITH FONMIN SAUVAGNARQUES REPORTED BEIRUT 12801), AS HAVING RECOGNIZED STATUS OF SUCH GOVT. DE FACTO--INTO RALLYING EUROPEAN SUPPORT FOR IT.

5. IN ANY EVENT, DESPITE CURRENT EUPHORIA OVER 'ARAFAT'S WELL-PUBLICIZED "RECONCILIATION" WITH KING HUSSEIN, HIS BEHAVIOR IN RABAT IS HAVING CONSIDERABLE REPERCUSSIONS AMONG DIE-HARD FEDAYEEN ELEMENTS HERE. HABASH, IN PRESS CONVERENCE HELD IN BEIRUT OCT 25, AGAIN EXCORIATED PLO LEADERSHIP FOR BOWING TO US, AS WELL AS "REACTIONARY" EGYPTIAN, SAUDI AND SYRIAN PLANS FOR PEACEFUL ME SETTLEMENT WITH ISRAEL. HE CLAIMED, INTER ALIA, THAT CONTACTS ARE STILL UNDERWAY WITH PFLP/GC AND ALF FOR CREATION OF NEW "REVOLUTIONARY" PLO THAT WOULD MAKE "REJECTIONIST" PALESTINIAN SENTIMENT A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH IN FUTURE. THUS, WHATEVER HIS SUCCESSES
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ON INTER-ARAB AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS, 'ARAFAT MUST STILL CONTEND WITH FUNDAMENTAL CLEVERAGE BETWEEN FEDAYEEN "MODERATES" NAD "REJECTIONISTS", WITH LATTER INCLUDING DIE-HARD ELEMENTS EVEN WITHIN PLO/FATAH RANKS. ALTHOUGH HE STILL WOULD PROBABLY PREFER TO AVOID ARMED CONFRONTATION WITH HIS DIE-HARD FEDAYEEN OPPONENTS, COULD BE THAT HABASH AND THE IRAQI AND LIBYAN-BACKED "REJECTIONISTS" WILL FORCE HIS HAND IN THIS REGARD. IN THAT EVENT, FIFTH POINT OF RABAT SUMMIT RESOLUTION RE NON-INTERFERENCE BY ARAB STATES "IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF PALESTINIAN ACTION" APPEARS TO OFFER 'ARAFAT A RATHER HANDY EXCUSE FOR DEALING WITH THEM DECISIVELY.
GODLEY

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